TL2276

FRENTE REVOLUCIONARIA DE TIMOR-LESTE INDEPENDENTE

(REVOLUTIONARY FRONT FOR AN INDEPENDENT EAST TIMOR)

FRETILIN

6 May 1986

Memo to all East Timor Solidarity Groups

Subject: The question of East Timor at the UN and in the Non-Aligned Movement

1) The question of East Timor is on the provisional agenda of the 41st Session of the UN General Assembly (GA). It is also on the agenda of the UN Special Committee on Decolonisation (Committee of 24).

2) On 26 April, I met Rafeeuddin Ahmed, UN Under-Secretary-General in charge of the implementation of Resolution 37/30. Present at this meeting was Mr Anabi, Ahmed's special assistant. During our discussion, I tried to find out two things: whether the Secretary-General (SG) will present his final report this year and what it will reflect, and secondly, whether he will request another postponement.

Mr Ahmed said that if there is no clear indication of any progress on the political aspect of the problem, the SG will have to present his final report. He said he did not consider it honest for him to delude the GA and me by suggesting another postponement, if there is no hope of any meaningful progress in the negotiations. At my insistence that the UN should not be part of any manouevre with Indonesia and Portugal to concoct some fake "solution", Mr Ahmed stated categorically that both the SG and he himself would not contemplate such an outcome.

3) We will probably not know until July whether the SG will present his final report. It is clear that Indonesia is gearing up for a showdown in the General Committee (the committee which establishes the agenda of the GA) when it meets the day after the 41st Session begins. Foreign Minister Mochtar hopes to amass sufficient votes in the General Committee to kill the item. Another possibility is that Indonesia will try to introduce a resolution in the GA which would consider the decolonisation of East Timor completed, thus shelving the issue once and for all. However, while Indonesia might succeed in the General Committee, it cannot succeed in the GA.

4) Should the SG present his final report to the 41st Session, our approach will be to have the item discussed in the 4th Committee of the GA. We will have the advantage of having the report from the SG which has to be discussed at the 4th Committee. If we succeed in having East Timor included on the agenda, we are considering a resolution which would have the GA request an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Such an opinion is non-binding and has to be requested in the form of a resolution by a simple majority of the GA. I believe that such an approach would have majority support.

5) The question of East Timor will certainly surface in the Non-Aligned summit meeting in Harare at the end of August. I have just received a communication from the Foreign Minister of Zimbabwe asking Fretilin to

accredit a representative to Zimbabwe. Roque Rodrigues, head of our Department of Organisation and Ideology, and our representative in Angola, will be accredited to Zimbabwe. We believe in Zimbabwe's commitment to our struggle and the opening of an office in Harare will facilitate our work in preparation for the Summit. Our strategy is based on the assumption that we will never be able to get a consensus in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in our favour. Therefore, we are trying simply to render East Timor a controversial issue in the Movement and to make sure plenty of countries speak up in our favour. If we can repeat the showdown that occurred last year at the Luanda ministerial meeting, this will be a victory.

6) We have no illusions that either the UN or NAM will ever resolve the Timor problem. With Indonesia being what it is, Fretilin cannot canvass enough support in either of these bodies. Therefore, our strategy is simply to keep the issue alive on the agenda. Developments in East Timor, Indonesia, West Papua and Washington (particularly in the US Congress) will determine the outcome. We are encouraged by the growing signs of Indonesia's chaotic economy, social unrest, the apparent conflicts inside the regime, and the potential for growing conflict in West Papua. These are all the elements we take into consideration.

Jose Ramos Horta,
Secretary, International Relations and Information.